

THE BEMINISCENCES OF CARL SCHURZ

exhausting his whole ingenuity in finding the best sort of red tape with which to strangle the project. His patience tried to the utmost, he, the minister, would then go to the King and tell him that such and such a rusty official could no longer he got along with and must necessarily give place to a more efficient person—whereupon the "old gentleman" melting with pity, would say, "Oh, he has so long been a faithful servant of the state, would it not be cruel to cast him aside like a squeezed-out orange?—no, I cannot do it." "And there," said Bismarck, "there we are!"⁵¹ ventured to suggest that an offer to resign on his part, if he could not have his way, might make the King less tender of his inefficient friends in high places. "Oh," said Bismarck, with a laugh, "I have tried that so often, too often, perhaps, to make it impressive. What do you think happens when I offer my resignation? My old gentleman begins to sob and cry—he actually sheds tears, and says, 'Now you want to leave me, too?'" Now, when I see him shed tears—what in the world can I do then?" So he went on for a while from one funny anecdote and from one satirical description to another, while I grew more and more amazed at the apparently reckless freedom of his talk with a person unknown to him. My amazement would have been less had I then known what I afterward learned, that this style of conversation was not unusual with him and that the old King

only smiled when he heard of it.

He then came hack to the Austrian war and he told me much about the diplomatic fencing which led up to it. With evident gusto he told me story after story showing how his diplomatic adversaries at that critical period had been like puppets in his hands, and how he had managed the German princes as they grouped themselves on one side or the other. Then he came to speak of the hattle of Koeniggraetz and especially of